

# Cannon Blast

Keeping the families of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division informed



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## LEAVING A LASTING impression

Staff Sgt. Valrica Pollard, medical logistics noncommissioned officer, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, plays with an Iraqi boy at the Civilian Military Operations Center Sept. 23. Several Soldiers from the 589th BSB had family members and friends send clothing and toys for the CMOC. (Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO)



# IG6 looks back on success

## Iron Gunner family and friends,

As we approach the completion of our mission in Iraq, each Soldier and organization in the brigade continues to perform each assigned task and mission in a superb manner, with discipline and a positive attitude. Our Soldiers are proud of their accomplishments, as am I.

In this final installment of the "Cannon Blast" I want each of you to know that I count it a personal and professional privilege to serve next to proven, competent and confident warriors.

Each formation in our brigade saw accomplishments. The 589th Brigade Support Battalion, in addition to their daily logistics operations, was involved with several division level operations, such as moving equipment and barrier material throughout the division's area of operations.

Every time they were called upon, the Iron Caissons responded and tackled every mission.

The 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment maintained the security of the Victory Base Complex. They also provided guided multiple-launch rocket system fires in support of the Marines in western Iraq and, with little warning, to our Iraqi partners and 4th Infantry Division units in an area south of Baghdad.

The brigade "separates" as they are known – Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 324th Network Support Company and Battery A, 26th Field Artillery Regiment, conducted their respective missions in an exemplary way.

The warriors in HHB executed



**Col. Allen Batschelet presents Spc. Edward Panico of 67th Forward Support Company, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, with a Combat Action Badge during a ceremony July 11 at the battalion's headquarters. Panico was in a convoy that was hit with an improvised explosive device, but safely got away.**

daily convoys, inspections of subordinate formations and control over the brigade. 324th NSC provided signal support to multiple bases. A/26 FA provided radar for the division's AO.

Soldiers in 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment continued to meet the demands of being the division's "go to" unit for missions on Fort Hood.

More recently, the troopers of Steel Rain took on the mission of assisting the brigade and division's redeployment operations by running the ports here in theater, a critical mission I am confident will be executed to standard.

Each day brings us closer to home. Information briefings and reintegration classes are ongoing, preparing us for our return. We are scheduled to return to Fort Hood in November or December.

After some in-processing and re-

integration training requirements, all deployed Soldiers will be afforded the opportunity to take 30 days of block leave.

More details will be forthcoming from the Rear Detachment and family readiness groups as we receive them.

In closing, I recognize and appreciate the sacrifices that each Soldier, family and loved one has made in support of our deployment. While each of us faced different challenges, as a brigade, we share the common bond of sacrifice and doing our part, large and small, on behalf of our unit, our Army, and our country.

I offer each of you my sincere appreciation and gratitude for your support and look forward to thanking you in person, in the very near future. IRONGUNNERS.

The "Cannon Blast" is an authorized publication for families of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. Contents of the "Blast" are unofficial and do not necessarily reflect the views of the 4th Infantry Division, Department of the Army, Department of Defense or the United States Government.

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### Fires Brigade Commander:

Col. Allen Batschelet

### Public Affairs Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge:

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec

gerald.malec@mnd-b.army.mil

### Cannon Blast Producer:

Spc. Allison Churchill

allison.churchill@mnd-b.army.mil

### For more Fires Brigade news:

[www.hood.army.mil/4thID](http://www.hood.army.mil/4thID)



# Deep Strike Soldiers use artillery muscle to keep enemy in check in Fallujah

By Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec  
Fires Bde. PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – As the warm desert sun rises on another day at Camp Fallujah, the Soldiers of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, maintain a quiet vigilance.

Known as the “Renegades,” the Soldiers occupy a small corner on the desolate, dusty camp once home to Saddam Hussein’s forces.

The artillerymen of Battery A stand ready to lend their lethal firepower to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, deployed from Camp Pendleton, Calif., whose members patrol the harsh streets of Fallujah and Ramadi seven days a week.

The artillery weapon of choice is the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, which is capable of delivering precise artillery strikes on enemy forces who desire to hinder the rebuilding of Iraq.

Once they receive the order to fire a mission, they have little time to react said Sgt. Nathan Lenahan, MLRS section chief, Btry. A.

“We will hear a loud beeping sound, and then the gunner announces that it’s a fire mission. We then throw all our gear on, get into our truck, and get out to our firing point as fast as possible,” said the Virginia Beach, Va., native who joined the Army in 2002.

Sgt. Frank Hernandez, MLRS gunner, Btry. A., said he hopes to keep forces outside the wire protected and serviced with quick and accurate artillery strikes when they need them.

“In my mind, what spells success is that all our missions are direct hits and that we take out the enemy when called to do so making sure they don’t harm anybody else,” continued the San Antonio native.

The Renegades moved to Fallujah from Camp Wolf in April. While at Camp Wolf, they not only stood ready to provide precision artillery strikes to coalition forces, the Soldiers also performed presence patrols, base security and even their own cooking.

The Renegades share a tight bond, which they say makes living in close quarters 24 hours a day, seven days a week, bearable.

“Because of our mission, we hardly have any downtime,” said Staff Sgt. Stanley Weeks, launcher section chief, Btry. A, who keeps his Soldiers motivated by reminding them that they are saving lives while taking out the enemy.

“Knowing that Soldiers and Marines out there appreciate the job that we do, that pretty much keeps us intact,” beamed the Queens, N.Y., native.

Spc. Denize Chagolla, driver, Btry. A, 2-20 FA, said he hopes the Iraqis will soon be able to effectively run their country. He said that he is also counting down the days until he is reunited with his wife and two daughters but appreciates the closeness between his fellow Renegades.

“We try to train on each other’s jobs, and we try to



**In this photo, contributed by Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, Soldiers conduct a live fire mission with the guided multiple-launch rocket system.**

understand each other better,” said Chagolla, who hails from Lamar, Iowa, the ice cream capital of the world.

To date, the Renegades have fired more than 30 successful strike missions while at Camp Fallujah as they continue to blaze the trail for MLRS units in combat.

“People are beginning to believe that MLRS has a place in combat,” said Spc. Brian Paddock, ammunition handler, Btry. A, a native of Carey, Ill. “We were originally thought not to have a place at first, but I think we have shown that we do have a future out here and a future in the war on terrorism and modern warfare.”



**A team of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment Soldiers drive their guided multiple-launch rocket system into position should they be called on to fire. The battery called Camp Fallujah home for the last half of the Fires Brigade’s deployment.**

## 589th BSB supports major MND-B missions

On June 16, 2005, on Gunner Field at Fort Hood, Texas, less than 300 Soldiers, mostly new to the U.S. Army, became 589th Brigade Support Battalion, the newest battalion in Fires Brigade and one of many pending a deployment to Iraq.

In less than six months, 589th BSB trained and deployed to Iraq and for 12 months successfully provided logistical support to the many units in the Baghdad area of operations.

Iron Caissons played a large role in securing Baghdad by moving barriers through Iraq, so Iraqi Police and Security Forces could create new security check-points.

They used big trucks from Company A, wrecker support from Co. B, and were commanded and controlled by Headquarters and Headquarters Company Soldiers in the tactical operations center. In all, the Iron Caissons moved more than 14,000 tons of concrete.

Iron Caissons also supported the units on Forward Operating Bases Rustimayiah and Falcon by escorting combat logistics patrols to these locations. More than 950 trailers of food and 750 tons of ice kept Soldiers on these bases fed and cool.

The Iron Caisson staff, initially consisting of young officers and NCOs, grew to become a combat hardened and finely tuned organization. They managed all the activity and operations of the battalion, provided Soldiers needed protective equipment, and ensured each convoy that left the base returned safely.

Although the IRON CAISSONS traveled 27,000 miles of Iraqi highway supporting units throughout the Baghdad area, they also supported their fellow Soldiers on Camp Liberty and the Victory Base Complex.

If you stopped by the Camp Liberty Post Exchange, you'd likely see a 589th BSB Soldier standing guard protecting the thousands of shoppers that frequented the facility each day.

One noncommissioned officer and a team of Soldiers enforced the force protection safety measures put in place at the PX. The hours were long, and the days were very hot, but then again, Soldiers and civilians shopped without worry.

Credit for the success of 589th BSB belongs with the Soldiers who faced the challenge of building, training and deploying a battalion in a very short time. Many Soldiers will leave Iraq one or two pay grades higher than when they arrived, a testament to their dedication and performance. All Soldiers will leave Iraq better at what they do and ready to begin preparations for their next mission, whatever that may be.

When 589th BSB redeploys, the Soldiers will not only be combat veterans, but leaders in their fields. Iron Caissons who **"Support the Fight!"**



589th Brigade Support Battalion's staff Soldiers, from left: 1st Lt. Earlglen Bowser, Sgt. 1st Class Patricia Garth, Capt. Jeremy McHugh, Capt. Angel Ortiz, Sgt. 1st Class Stevie Faust, Capt. Ashley Payne, Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Taylor, Lt. Col. Barry Diehl, Maj. Kelly Sandifer, Capt. Wyatt Bickett, Sgt. 1st Class Dean Parks, Capt. Jabulani Fuller, Staff Sgt. Aldonia Stewart, Maj. Todd Bertulis and Master Sgt. Gregory Johnson. For more photos of 589th BSB, see page 22.



# Quiet ceremony makes history

By Spc. Allison Churchill  
Fires Bde. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – With the quiet uncasing of their colors Jan. 8, Soldiers in the Army's Fires Brigade marked a new day in the role of division and corps level fire support.

Part of the 4th Infantry Division, the Fires Bde. now flies its colors outside its Camp Liberty headquarters.

"This was a historic occasion, signifying the first deployment of a fires brigade into the combat theater," said Col. Allen Batschelet, commander, Fires Bde.

The Fires Brigade formerly held all of the 4th Inf. Div.'s artillery assets and was known as the Division Artillery.

When the division modularized in December 2004, most of DIVARTY's direct fire assets were dispersed to other brigades.

The Fires Brigade officially stood up in June 2005. At that time, it gained a support battalion, the 589th Brigade Support Battalion; a communications com-

pany, the 324th Network Support Company; and a target-acquisition battery, Battery A, 26th Field Artillery Regiment.

One of the Fires Brigade's newest assets is the guided multiple-launch rocket system, employed by the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery.

The brigade's independence allows it to support other divisions as well as 4th Inf. Div., said Batschelet.

Currently one of 2-20 FA's batteries is supporting a Marine unit and another is supporting the 101st Airborne Division.

Soldiers say they are proud to serve in the newly formed brigade.

"We're able to do more in less time," observed Sgt. 1st Class Dwight Richard, operations non-commissioned officer in charge, Fires Bde.

Richard, who deployed to the first Operation Iraqi Freedom when Fires Bde. was still DIVARTY, said he is proud of what the unit has accomplished since its conversion in a short period of time.

"I saw the unit lose direct fire units, gain support units," said Richard. "I saw it become what it is today."

Use of field artillery in counter-insurgency operations is a relatively new concept, said Batschelet, and procedures are constantly being updated to meet the demands of combat.

Weapons systems are being used in different ways than originally anticipated because "as the enemy adapts, we adapt," said Batschelet.

While the Army irons out the role of artillery in the newest warfare concept, the 4th Inf. Div.'s Fires Bde. will be setting the example.

Other divisions will be assigned fires brigades as they reach the "ready and available" phase of modularity, said Lt. Col. Samuel White in "The Fires Brigade: Not Your Daddy's FFA HQ," Field Artillery Magazine, November/December 2005.

"Some think it's still a concept – but it's a reality," said Richard. "We made it happen."



Col. Allen Batschelet, commander, Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela, Fires Bde., uncasing the brigade's colors in a nighttime ceremony outside brigade headquarters on Camp Liberty, Iraq. The ceremony started the first deployment of a fires brigade in the Army. (Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO)

# It's a Hard Rock life...



**Left: Sgts. Jason Trahan and Christopher Fernandez carry Spc. Todd Fatzinger during the medical evacuation scenario event of the Top M1114 Crew Competition.**

The past year has been one of excitement, professional growth, and change for the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of Fires Brigade.

The battery deployed in late November and early December of 2005 and soon after began operations in Baghdad.

The Hard Rock Battery took on numerous missions, including establishing the Brigade Headquarters and operations center, setting up and running the brigade aid station and operating the brigade commander's personal security detachment.

In support of these missions, the battery supply section ensured all of our Soldiers were properly equipped and the training room closely tracked all evaluations, awards, and training requirements.

In addition to supporting the brigade, several Hard Rock Soldiers were selected to augment the 4th Infantry Division Staff. Officers from the battery were selected to assist the division command group. HHB also has Soldiers in division intelligence, planning, legal operations, and artillery and mortar fire tracking and analysis.

Three Hard Rock Soldiers – Maj. Kirk Calloway, Sgt. Kelly Stewart and Spc. Patrie Cambell-

Sobish — were chosen to work with Military Transition Teams and interact directly with our Iraqi partners, preparing them for the challenge of securing the country on their own.

The Fires Brigade held monthly Soldier competitions to encourage unit esprit de corps and stimulate professional growth. The troopers of Hard Rock represented their battery very well, taking first place in two of the competitions.

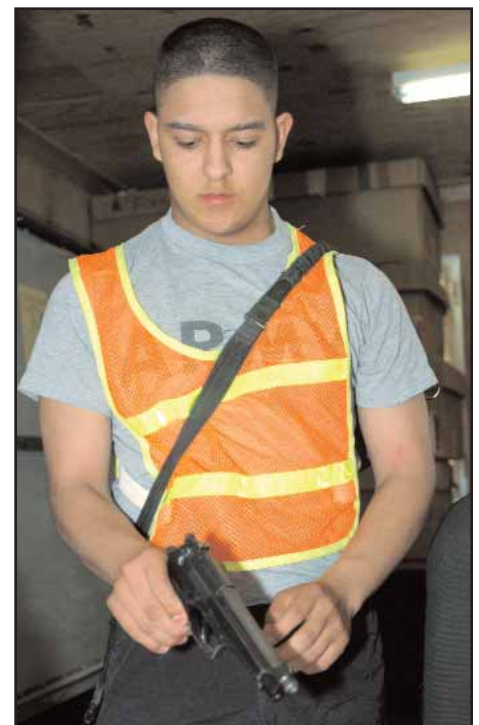
In the Fires Brigade Top Soldier Competition in July, Sgt. Jason Trahan, PSD, was named the Top Noncommissioned in the Brigade.

In August, Fires Brigade tested teamwork and tactical skills with the Humvee Crew Competition. The PSD team of Trahan, Sgt. Christopher Fernandez and Spc. Todd Fatzinger took home top honors.

Capt. Damon Wells turned over command of the Hard Rock Battery to Capt. William Ward in September. Wells and his wife, Andrea, led the battery for 15 months. Their hard work and dedication guaranteed success in everything the Battery did. The Hard Rock Soldiers wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Working together, the troops of Hard Rock completed every mission put in front of them

and consistently demonstrated their professionalism and dedication. The families and loved ones of the battery have every reason to be proud of their sons, daughters and spouses. They represented the Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and the United States with honor, integrity and selfless service.



**Spc. Luis Garcia trains for a battery weapons competition.**



# A/26 celebrates successful mission

Greetings to the friends and families in the Wolfpack! It gives us great pleasure to write this final article.

So much has happened during this deployment. Battery A, 26th Field Artillery Regiment has done a tremendous job. We grew from the small radar battery that left Fort Hood in November to a diverse organization with critical missions.

As the year ends we will begin our final mission of redeployment and reintegration. We have no doubt we will complete this mission to the same standard, first rate.

Our battery has accomplished a number of missions for the Fires Brigade this year.

First Section deployed nearly two months early in order to begin radar operations in Taji. The main body deployed to Kuwait to conduct training and receive the unit's equipment.

Once everyone was here we got to work. To date the battery has conducted more than 80 combat missions and driven more than 5,000 miles in support of operations throughout the Baghdad area.

The Battery convoy team led counter-fire inspection and radar training teams, as well as combat logistics patrols for all field artillery systems in theater.

Members of the Wolfpack such as Chief Warrant Officer 2 Marvin Palmer and Sgt. 1st Class Donald Gamblin became experts in new radar systems. They used their knowledge to train and evaluate crews in other units. Their profes-



**Battery A, 26th Field Artillery Regiment Soldiers enjoy a barbeque celebrating awards and promotions Aug. 1 in the battery area. The parties were held almost monthly, with video game and card tournaments inside to give Soldiers a chance to kick back.**

sionalism made other units better war fighters.

The Metro Section became critical to the division, providing field artillery meteorological data for all of Multi-National Division — Baghdad utilizing the new Profiler MET system. They were ready when the Division needed them and did an outstanding job.

We had numerous Soldiers who were promoted and/or re-enlisted. It has been a year of growth and change. To all the Soldiers and their families, I congratulate you on these

achievements and successes. They are well earned and well deserved.

We welcomed three new members to the Wolfpack during the deployment: Christopher Jones, born just before his father left in October; Elijah Sampson, born Jan. 21; and J.J. Jones born May 5.

We would like to congratulate everyone in the family readiness group on a successful deployment. A deployment is not a time of happiness, but you leaned on each other, shared ups and downs and supported your Soldiers.

## Battle buddies help each other through stress of observing combat

**By Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec  
Fires Bde. PAO**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - The 4th Infantry Division's Rear Operations Center is considered the eyes and ears of what's happening outside the wire, 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week.

The Soldiers who run the ROC come from the Fires Brigade and are charged with gathering and passing on information quickly to commanders at all levels.

"I work as a radio transmission operator where I listen for the updates and changes in convoy routes, route status, and nine-line medivac requests for all of Iraq," said Pfc. Joseph Baudhuin, Headquarters and

Headquarters Battery, Fires Bde.

Baudhuin, along with his fellow Soldiers, maintain constant situational awareness..

"I actually see what's happening all over Iraq everyday," said Baudhuin, with a serious look on his face as he also explained that all the information he gathers gets reported each day to give commanders a clear picture of what's happening on the ground.

The hardest part about the job is reporting the serious incidents involving Soldiers, said Baudhuin, a recent high school graduate from Lakeville, Minn.

"Hearing it over the radio - it's almost like you are really there, but you then remember that you have to pass

Please see **BUDDIES** page 15

## ***324th NSC improves commo throughout Baghdad***

The 324th Network Support Company, a small but essential force, provided vital signal assets to the Multi-National Division – Baghdad area of operations throughout Operation Enduring Freedom 05-07.

One early mission saw us ensuring convoy mission capability for Battery A, 26th Field Artillery and Headquarters and Headquarters Battery. We established contact teams that trained convoy teams to properly use the communications systems in the vehicles.

We also developed a checklist used weekly and before each convoy left the wire, helping convoys maintain communications standards.

Several 324th NSC Soldiers regularly deployed to other camps to give their comrades connectivity. The command post node team traveled to Forward Operating Base Justice and the Camp Liberty Detainee Holding Area to provide secure and non-secure Internet lines.

This task proved its importance several times. Not only did the CPN team give Soldiers at FOB Shield extended radio support, they also called in medical evacuation requests.

The Network Operations/Computer Network Defense section served as the parent element for deployed Fires Bde. CPNs. It provided technical oversight and remotely managed the CPNs at the Camp Liberty DHA, FOBs Shield, Justice and Q-West and Camp Fallujah.

In May, 324th NSC successfully set-up extended FM coverage for the MND-B battle space by setting up a retransmission station team on Signal Hill. The coverage allows further communications when brigade convoys leave the wire.

The 324th NSC convoy team later traveled to FOBs Justice and Shield to provide the same service, and extended the FM coverage an extra 40 kilometers, making

Baghdad a less dangerous place to be.

The company was also tasked to provide enhanced position location reporting system coverage to FOB Justice. The EPLRS network provided more than 629 square kilometers of Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade and Below coverage, extending coverage from Baghdad to Taji.

Our Soldiers also found more space in the division network. At the CPN, they implemented a way to run private networks within another network, creating more internet protocol space.

We also reconfigured equipment to provide better quality service and more non-secure bandwidth space.

Phoenix Soldiers take the fact that people think that there are never any issues with the network as a compliment. Seamless communication is something 324th NSC strives for.







**The Fires Brigade S-1 team, front, from left: Spc. Rosalio Laguna, Staff Sgt. LaTrece Peterson, Sgt. 1st Class Shauna Patterson and Maj. Andrey Tymniak. Back, from left: Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman, Spc. Joseph Baudhuin, Spc. Joshua Overton and Warrant Officer 1 Arnold Guzman.**

## S-1 gives Soldiers what they deserve

The Fires Brigade S-1 office has greatly contributed to Fires Brigade's success in Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07 by making sure that all administrative support required for our Soldiers was completed in a timely and accurate manner. Our Soldiers deserve the best support, and in this regard, the Brigade S-1 office can proudly say that we have successfully accomplished our mission.

The Fires Bde. S-1 office consists of Maj. Andrey Tymniak, S1 officer-in-charge; Warrant Officer 1 Arnold Guzman, human resources technician; Sgt. 1st Class Shauna Patterson, S-1 noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman, night shift noncommissioned officer; Staff Sgt. LaTrece Peterson, administrative noncommissioned officer; and Spcs. Rosalio Laguna, Joshua Overton and Joseph Baudhuin, administrative clerks.

We ensured that all Soldiers received their deployment finance entitlements by identifying issues early and by quickly resolving these issues. We quickly established procedures for processing Soldiers that required emergency leave.

Due to this quick set up, we were able to submit all reports to the proper agencies with no disruptions or delays.

Our office was also responsible for ensuring that all Soldiers eligible for promotion were identified. More than 100 Soldiers were promoted to the next higher grade while deployed to Iraq.

One of our biggest tasks while deployed was the management of the environmental morale leave program. This program allowed our Soldiers to enjoy two weeks of deserved time off with the government paying for the flight to a destination of their choice anywhere in the world. We successfully achieved our EML participation goal by sending more 850 eligible Soldiers on EML.

Our Soldiers deserve special recognition for their sacrifice and service to our Army and our great nation. It is our responsibility to ensure that each Soldier who has served honorably in Iraq during the past year gets recognized with an award.

Every Fires Brigade Soldier will be awarded the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, an Overseas Service Ribbon; and depending on the level and scope of responsibility of the Soldier, they will be awarded an Army Achievement Medal, an Army Commendation Medal, a Meritorious Service Medal or a Bronze Star Medal.

We are currently processing these awards so that our Soldiers can be recognized for their hard work during the deployment prior to our departure from Iraq.

Our support will continue as we prepare for our re-deployment to Fort Hood with manifest and reverse-SRP operations. Our support to the Fires Brigade has played a significant role to the overall success of the deployment. We are proud of our accomplishments during the past year.

# S-2 shares intelligence with MND-B

The Army trains Soldiers to adapt and overcome all obstacles in their path. During this deployment, we have learned numerous lessons on soldiering that extend well beyond the lessons of our initial training.

Soldiers of the Fires Brigade intelligence section have considered it both an honor and a challenge to have been able to serve during Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07. Our personnel are mission-essential and have worked many long hours to provide relevant and timely information to the brigade.

Prior to deployment, our team included Maj. Bryan Gibby, officer-in-charge; Capt. Jewell Hoscila, assistant S-2; Capt. Richard Ward, assistant S-2; Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Quick, targeting officer; Master Sgt. Rodney Byus, noncommissioned officer-in-charge; Sgt. 1st Class Adam Scarr, targeting NCO; Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman, senior intelligence analyst and Staff Sgt. Lawanda Perry, intelligence sergeant. Our intelligence specialists were Spc. Kelly Stewart, Pfc. Matthew Wilson, Pvt. Rachel

Nadeau and Pvt. Kristin Blair. The sole topographic analyst was Spc. Sean Hefflin and Pvt. Ryan Stowell was the targeting specialist.

We learned in November our mission called for split operations.

Scarr and the rear operations center Soldiers made the initial move into theater.

From that day forth, every S-2 officer, NCO and Soldier has been tasked to fulfill critical and specialized positions within the Multi-National Division – Baghdad battle space.

After we left Fort Hood, Staff Sgt. Michele Miller, Sgt. Bradford Oliver, Sgt. David Penton, and Spc. Samuel Atkins joined the 2 Shop. Miller, Penton, Oliver and Hefflin now make a geospatial information and services team. They fulfilled all of the topographic needs of the brigade and other units within the division.

The missions of the intelligence personnel have been as diverse as the personalities that have filled them. Maj. Bryan Gibby has taken the role as the liaison between intelligence and targeting operations at

Division Headquarters.

Byus left the shop in July to become first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, his second time in the position.

Quick, now a CW4, was assigned as a liaison within Corps HQs.

Hoscila, Atkins, Stowell and now Pfc. Nadeau have been working in the division fire for effects cell conducting analysis on indirect fire attacks in the MND-B area of operations.

Stewart has been working for a military transition team, teaching Iraqis to lead their country.

The remainder of the section continued to support the fight at Brigade Headquarters keeping abreast of enemy activities and ensuring that convoys remain informed.

Even today, we remain vigilant for changes in enemy activities. From operational security, convoy briefings, and conducting guard missions, our Soldiers have done it all.

**The S-2 team, back, from left: Staff Sgt. Michele Miller, Sgt. Matthew Wilson, Pvt. Ryan Stowell, Sgt. 1st Class Adam Scarr, Sgt. Kelly Stewart, Pfc. Kristin Blair and Sgt. Bradford Oliver. Front, from left: Pfc. Rachel Nadeau, Capt. Richard Ward, Capt. Jewell Hoscila, Chief Warrant Officer 4 James Quick, Maj. Bryan Gibby and Sgt. 1st Class Lawanda Perry. For more personnel see page 20.**





# S-3: More than just fragos

In the last 12 months, the Soldiers of the Fires Brigade Operations Section performed remarkably in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

The S-3 Soldiers stayed busy executing numerous daily tasks. These tasks included preparing written orders, tracking convoys and keeping subordinate and higher units informed of brigade activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Soldiers also maintained the section's equipment, conducted training and executed escort/guard duty tasks.

Soon after arriving in Iraq, the section was called upon to fill critical positions in the Division. A total of seven officers from the S-3 section fill positions on the Division staff.

With all of the field grade officers supporting Division missions, this put a heavy workload on the senior Battle Captain for the first seven months of the deployment, a position which saw a few faces itself.

Capt. Ali Khan worked as Assistant Operations Officer for the first three months of the deployment.

**Second shift team, standing: Sgt. 1st Class Dwight Richard and Sgt. Robert Haring. Sitting, from left: Pfc. Eduardo Guiterrez, Pfc. Joshua Duff and Pfc. Kenneth Honour. For more photos see page 20.**



**The night shift staff, back, from left: Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Simpson, Spc. Lamart Hart and Spc. Christopher Owen. Front, from left: Master Sgt. Wenseslao Huerta, Sgt. Thomas Hance and Spc. Brandon Fowlkes.**

ment then moved down to 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery to work as the Battle Captain

In March, Capt. Jared Sutton reported to the operations section following his successful command of Battery B, 2-20 FA. He assumed the role of Assistant Operations Officer and Battle Captain with Capt. William Ward. Ward later became the Redeployment Officer, and on Sept. 1 took command of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

In July, Maj. Brian Pierce became the new brigade Operations Officer and Maj. Terrance Braley

became the Assistant Operations Officer.

Capt. Samuel Burns joined the S-3 team in August after completing his command of Company A, 589th Brigade Support Battalion.

The S-3 Soldiers regularly accomplished more than their daily tasks. Sgt. 1st Class Cardell Drake was recommended for acceptance in the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

Sgt. Pulliam Vee won Noncommissioned Officer of the month and Pfc. Randy Oglesby won Soldier of the month. Pfc. Kenneth Honour was promoted to specialist during and became the proud father of Kenneth Jr. Spc. Lamart Hart earned more than 300 Army correspondence credit hours while deployed.

In order to relieve the soldiers from their routine and busy schedule, the command organized activities to enhance morale.

The section participated in the Deputy Commander's Challenge, where the officers and senior NCO's put on their body armor and ran or walked six miles. 1st Lt. Edward Talamera won bragging rights by being the first officer across the finish line.

Other activities included movie nights, cook outs and occasional days off.

The deployment was a long year for everyone involved, but it was eventful. The section worked hard, but also found time to play.



# Remembering the 'Battling Ba

By Spc. Allison Churchill  
Fires Bde. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - "We are the Battling Bastards of Bataan; No Mama, no Papa, no Uncle Sam; no Aunts, no Uncles, no Nephews, no Nieces; no Pills, no Planes, no Artillery Pieces; and nobody gives a damn."-Frank Hewlett, 1942.

Such became the battle cry of U.S. and Filipino Soldiers defending Bataan, Philippines, during World War II, as they continued to fight despite a shortage of food, ammunition, medicine, vehicles and gasoline.

Working with outdated equipment, the undernourished troops were unable to hold back the invasion of the Japanese army April 9, 1942, and Maj. Gen. Edward King was forced to surrender.

The following day the conquering Japanese forced nearly 75,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war to march approximately 160 kilometers to POW Camp O'Donnell.

Along the route the prisoners were beaten randomly and denied food and water for several days. Many were tortured and those who fell behind were executed through various means - shot, beheaded or bayoneted. Many also died of malaria, dehydration and dysentery.

To honor the Soldiers who lived and died during the infamous march, and afterwards in POW camps where they were used as slave labor, Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, held a ceremony at brigade headquarters and a memorial march around Z Lake May 20.

Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela, Fires Bde., spearheaded the event, based on a similar marathon held annually at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. Canuela has participated twice in that event.

Canuela is one of two Soldiers in the Fires Brigade with a personal tie to the Bataan Death March. His grandfather, Paulino Santos, a scout in the Filipino army, was killed during the march.

Canuela, who lived in the



**Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela commands the color guard for the Bag Bataan Memorial Death March May 20. Canuela said he chose Sgts. Enrique Collazo, Bradford Oliver and Patricia Matos to represent the demographics of the Soldiers and Filipinos in the original march during World War II. (Photos by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO)**



# stards of Bataan' in Baghdad

Philippines as a child, said listening to stories about the Bataan Death March and its heroes had a huge impact on him.

"The old Soldiers in town instilled values; 'Don't give up, don't quit,' which are now part of the (U.S. Army's) Warrior Ethos," said Canuela.

The Army has given Canuela several opportunities to pay tribute to and educate others about Bataan, he said, adding that he wanted to continue this during his deployment.

Canuela first marched in the memorial event in 1997 while attending the sergeants major academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

In 2002, while serving as post command sergeant major of WSMR, Canuela posed as a model for a statue commissioned to mark the 60th anniversary of the march. The artist, Kelly Hester, asked for a Hispanic, an American and a Filipino to represent the dominant nationalities in the march.

The statue, "Heroes of Bataan" features two Soldiers, carrying a third.

Guardsmen from New Mexico's 200th Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) and the Guard's

composite 192nd and 194th Tank Battalions made up the majority of the U.S. fighting force on Bataan. The 192nd and 194th combined companies were from Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota and Missouri. Many of those who did not die in the march died during the three years they were held as POWs.

Most of the surviving American Soldiers from the New Mexico National Guard still live in the state. In 1989 the New Mexico State University Army Reserve Officer Training Corps started a memorial march in their honor and in 1992 the event moved to White Sands.

Canuela said his close involvement with the community of survivors inspired the Baghdad event.

"I made a promise to the Bataan survivors that I will continue to educate our folks about their heroism, their love for their country and most of all, for their buddies who did not make it back," said Canuela.

The Bataan tragedy can teach today's Soldiers numerous lessons, said Canuela, such as how to fairly treat POWs and the tenets of the

Warrior Ethos. He said it is important to remember current Soldiers Missing-in-Action, such as Sgt. Keith "Matt" Maupin, who has been MIA in Iraq since April 9, 2004.

Keeping the spirit of the march alive, Canuela chose color guard members to reflect the demographics of American troops in Bataan; a Caucasian male, a Hispanic male and a Caucasian woman - in memory of the nurses present at Bataan - for the opening ceremony.

Sgt. 1st Class James Herron, of 324th Network Support Company, son of a Bataan survivor, participated in this year's event.

Herron's father, Lawrence Weisdorfer, a native of Roy, New Mexico, was in the 200th Coast Artillery, NMNG. Weisdorfer survived the ordeals of the march and POW camp.

Herron said he was only 3 years old when his father died so he did not hear first-hand stories from his father but said he recalls that the POW experience left a bad impression of the military as a whole on his mother.

"My mother kept me from joining (the Army) when I finished high school," said Herron. "She said my dad fought for our country and his children didn't need to."

One of the stories Herron's mother did share was that of Weisdorfer helping his fellow prisoners by smuggling medicine into camp before getting moved to a Japanese shipyard.

"I'm proud that my dad served his country and survived the brutal Bataan Death March," said Herron.

Due to force protection and mission requirements the Baghdad Bataan Memorial Death March was four miles instead of the 26.5 marched at the WSTC, but the meaning was clear to Soldiers.

"There's no way anyone can replicate the march in the jungles of the Philippines," added Canuela.

"There was no hard part except thinking about those who went through (the Bataan Death March)," said Sgt. Enrique Collazo, operations sergeant, Fires Bde., and one of the color guard Soldiers for the event.



**Soldiers from 589th Brigade Support Battalion, Fires Brigade head out in the early morning to start the Baghdad Bataan Memorial Death March.**

# S-4 looks back on year of challenges



**The logistics leaders, back, from left: Sgt. 1st Class Richard Drummond, Sgt. Kurt Gullens, Spc. Michael Russo and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lionel Marco. Middle: CW2 William Blair, Maj. John Roadcap and Master Sgt. Cherry Sibert. Front: Master Sgt. Shelly Gonsalves and Sgt. Sisily Eager.**

The S-4 Section has persevered throughout the deployment preparation, execution and now the long awaited redeployment.

We end this rotation with almost an entirely new crew, as only the property book office and supply Sgts. Sisily Eager and Kurt Gullens and Master Sgt. Shelly Gonsalves are still here. Everyone has become an expert at Power Point and long briefings.

Gonsalves pushed all her Soldiers to improve themselves by taking correspondence and college courses and appearing in front of boards. They will all keep memories of getting their butts chewed by Gonsalves, who always tells it like it is.

All the hard work and pressure had big pay offs. Spc. Michael Russo, Eager and Gullens will all redeploy in promotable status.

Upon redeployment Gullens

will finally go to his long-awaited advanced individual training to change his military occupational specialty. I know he will always take with him the memories of his deployments with the Fires Brigade.

As the repair and utilities noncommissioned officer, he put so many holes in the walls of our headquarters building that we all hope there will not be a structural catastrophe when we leave.

Russo will return to his real section, the fires effects cell and will decide if he will re-enlist to become a high-speed airborne ranger or become a civilian again.

Gonsalves will be retiring and making the transition into civilian life. Master Sgt. Cherry Sibert will move to a new duty station. We are all hoping she goes to a nice, warm place where she alone can control the temperature in her office.

Eager will attend college

for a few months when she gets back. She hopes to be promoted and take charge of her own supply room. She's especially excited to reunite with her children.

The section will be left in the hands of our high-speed "fear full" leader Maj. John Roadcap. He will continue to cause chaos with the Division G4 staff, because that is what artillery officers do when they are assigned to logistic positions.

Chief Warrant Officers 2 Willard Blair and Lionel Marco will remain by his side creating headaches of their own in the world of maintenance and property accountability.

Throughout the huge transition of leadership in the S-4 section those who have remained learned patience, if nothing else. It has been a good tour of duty but we are all happy to see it end.



# S-6 helps keep Fires Bde. active

It was a busy year for the Fires Brigade S-6 Shop. Our Soldiers had a hand in almost all the brigade's major activities.

The Saint Barbara's Day Ball in June kept us busy. Staff Sgt. Lisa Deis played a major role in a video produced for the show and Spc. Brandon Cortez created a photo slideshow for the evening's beginning. During the ceremony Master Sgt. Trevor Jones was inducted into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

Another of our major tasks was training other Soldiers on communications. Staff Sgt. Robert Martinez created a video, starring several S-6 Soldiers, explaining how to use the Harris radio, an essential piece of convoy equipment.

Sgt. 1st Class John Terry trained other Soldiers to declassify their computers for redeployment.

Most of our Soldiers advanced in their career thanks to mentoring from other Soldiers in the section. Jones, a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club member, mentored Martinez and Staff Sgt. Patricia Matos, who both went to the SAMC board.

Spcs. Damian Wilson and Ariel Class met success in the promotion board after mentoring from their noncommissioned officers.

Sgt. Barron Rhodes became a minor celebrity early in the deployment when he and another Soldier



**The S-6 section, back, from left: Sgt. 1st Class John Terry, Spc. Damian Wilson, Master Sgt. Trevor Jones, Spc. Brandon Cortez and Warrant Officer 1 Christopher Birmingham. Front, from left: Staff Sgt. Patricia Matos, Spc. Ariel Class, Maj. Clarence White, Staff Sgt. Lisa Deis and Sgt. Barron Rhodes.**

saved a troop who had fallen out on the side of a road.

After Capt. Nina Lauramore helped establish communications for the brigade, she moved out to the International Zone and is the communications expert there.

Warrant Officer 1 Christopher Birmingham, who acted as officer-in-charge while Maj. Clarence White was on leave, is helping us redeploy. Upon return to Fort Hood

he is getting married.

When the S-6 Soldiers could get away from their work, Wilson and Rhodes played for the brigade's flag football team, while Class was able to break White's chess record, earning a day off for further relaxation.

All in all the section performed its mission exceptionally well, while making the most of opportunities to have some fun.

## BUDDIES, cont'd from pg. 7

on what you hear over the radio quickly and without hesitation."

Baudhuin is not alone. He has a battle buddy who's been by his side through basic combat and advanced individual training, his first assignment at Fort Hood and now, his first deployment - Pfc. Robert Shofner, also of HHB, Fires Bde.

While both Soldiers said they started out a bit rough in basic training, they motivated each other through air traffic controller school at Fort Rucker, Ala., to graduate from a specialty that has only a 33 percent pass rate.

"He seems like a brother to me now," said Baudhuin, of Shofner. "Being roommates, you really learn a lot about somebody - what gets on their nerves. You know what makes them happy, you laugh together because you are going through the same stuff together."

"I first found out about him because he had gained the name 'Cheeseburger' in basic training," said Shofner, with a slight chuckle.

"He ate a cheeseburger when he was not supposed

to at chow, then we were all smoked for that. From then on, we all called him Cheeseburger - nobody really knew his real name," said Shofner, a Jasper, Texas, native.

"Overall, the two of them are very squared away," said Sgt. 1st Class Antwone Reese, ROC noncommissioned officer in charge.

"They always seem to know what to do, when to do it and they work very well together, which in turn, makes my job a whole lot easier," continued Reese.

Although glad he has a battle buddy to lean on throughout his deployment, Baudhuin admits it still is hard to be far from home.

"My wife Katelynn's birthday was just the other day, and I really wished I could have been there for that," said a slightly misty-eyed Baudhuin. "But I sent her a gift a while ago, and I called home on her birthday and heard her open it up - and that was really neat."

"The Army is great. They take care of you. They take care of your family and I really want to make this a career if my wife will let me," said Baudhuin.

# Fires Bde. honors Saint Barbara in Iraq



**Maj. Andrey Tymniak receives congratulations and the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara medallion from Col. Allen Batschelet at the Saint Barbara's Day Ball June 25 on Camp Victory, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO)**

**By Spc. Allison Churchill  
Fires Bde. PAO**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, honored a long-standing artillery tradition with its first Saint Barbara's Day Ball June 25.

Held at the Joint Visitor's Center on Camp Victory, Iraq, the brigade's leaders took the opportunity to induct 31 Soldiers into the Order of Saint Barbara, an honorary military society of the U.S. Field Artillery.

The society has two levels, the first being the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara. The most distinguished level is the Ancient Order, a select group who have been determined to have achieved "long-term, exceptional service to the field artillery, surpassing even their brethren in the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara," according to the Field Artillery Association website.

United States Marine and Army field artillery Soldiers, along with their military and civilian supporters, are eligible for membership.

Barbara's own struggles could be compared to the fight in Iraq today, said the guest speaker Brig. Gen. David Halverson, assistant division commander (support), 4th Inf. Div.

According to legend, Saint Barbara, who lived near Nicomedia in Asia Minor, converted to Christianity around 300 A.D. Her father, Dioscorus, a strict pagan, brought her before the prefect of the province, who decreed that she be tortured and put to death. Dioscorus himself took her up on a mountain to carry out the sentence and beheaded his own daughter. Subsequently, on his way back down the mountain, Barbara's father was struck by lightning and his body consumed by fire.

Early artillerymen decided upon Saint Barbara as

their patron saint.

"She had a certain standard that she stood up for," said Halverson, the division's senior artilleryman. "Therefore, this is very similar to what we are doing in Iraq today. We're standing for a country that we know is important, and we know it's the right thing to do."

Eighteen Fires Bde. Soldiers and 12 Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were inducted into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

Col. Allen Batschelet, commander, Fires Bde., Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela and Staff Sgt. LaTrece Peterson, administration non-commissioned officer, presented the inductees with medallions signifying their induction.

Canuela, who has spent nearly 28 years as an artilleryman, was given the honor of receiving the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara medallion, presented by Halverson.

"The Ancient Order of Saint Barbara is reserved for an elite few whose careers have embodied the spirit, dignity and sense of sacrifice and commitment epitomized by Saint Barbara," announced Maj. Andy Weatherstone, S-3 officer-in-charge, Fires Bde., who served as the evening's master of ceremonies.

To commemorate the significance of the ball being the brigade's first such event, senior enlisted leaders created a "base charge" for future batches of Artillery Punch.

Due to a ban on alcohol, in accordance with General Order I, the offerings combined sparkling grape juice to represent wine and champagne, a variety of teas made with drink mixes took over as 'hard liquor,' and weak coffee mixed with oatmeal simulated water from the local "Z Lake."

The crowd of nearly 150 Soldiers and Marines were treated to a humorous video produced by the Fires Bde. public affairs office and communications sections, depicting a satirical take on the brigade's daily operations.

"I think this celebration is a great opportunity for fellow artillerymen to get together, meet with one another and have fun while celebrating and reflecting on the history of field artillery," said Sgt. 1st Class David Sims, one of the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara inductees, who serves as a radio crew chief with Btry. A, 26th FA.

1st Sgt. Brian Bruce, Battery A, 26th FA, who recited a segment of the "Artillery Poem," said events such as this promote kinship among Soldiers with a common background.

"What I enjoy about my job in the field artillery, or in the Army for that matter, is a tight sense of camaraderie we have. You just don't find this anywhere else in the world," said Bruce.

The feast of Saint Barbara falls on December 4 and is traditionally recognized by a formal dining-in or military dinner, often involving presentation of the Order of Saint Barbara. The Fires Brigade plans to have another, more traditional, Saint Barbara's Day Ball upon its redeployment to Fort Hood, Texas.



# Medical team takes a look back at tour



**The Headquarters Medical Team, back, from left: Capt. Jim Silverstrim, Spc. Jeffery Legere, Sgt. 1st Class James Walck, Spc. Timothy Peters and 2nd Lt. Bryan French. Front, from left: Sgt. Angelina Marrero, Capt. Mark Roschewski, Spc. Patrie Campbell, Maj. Barbara Bowsher and Staff Sgt. Timothy Foster.**

It was a challenging and rewarding deployment for the Fires Brigade Medical Team.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Battery Platoon assisted a variety of missions.

Maj. Barbara Bowsher, brigade surgeon, and physicians Lt. Col. Jon Allison and Capt. Mark Roschewski — before he left — lent their medical training to the

602nd Troop Medical Clinic.

Capt. James Silverstrim stayed busy planning medical support and operations for the brigade.

The majority of the platoon — including 2nd Lt. Bryan French, platoon leader; Sgt. 1st Class James Walck, platoon sergeant; Staff Sgt. Timothy Foster, Sgt. Angelina Marrero and the newly added Sgt. Erin Brashears — ran

sick call, ensuring everyone got back in the battle quickly.

Cpl. Saul Trevino and Pfc. Alex Mecca provided medical support to the brigade personal security detachment. Spc. Patrie Campbell also regularly left the wire as a member of the 6th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team.

Spcs. Larry Mellette, Timothy Peters and Jeffery Legere supported the division's detainee holding area.

The 589th Brigade Support Battalion Team also supported the brigade and outlying units.

Medical operations officer 1st Lt. David Kuhn, Staff Sgt. Christopher Parks, operations non-commissioned officer, and Sgt. Jose Trevizo, patient administration NCO manage medical readiness, including making sure Soldiers get needed shots, and medical planning for all the battalion's missions.

The medical logistics team of 2nd Lt. Tanya McClendon and Staff Sgt. Valrica Pollard ordered and distributed all medical supplies for the brigade and other units.

The 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery, medical team, overseen Please see **MEDICS** page 19



**Above, left: The 589th Brigade Support Battalion Medical Team, from left: 2nd Lt. Tanya McClendon, Staff Sgt. Valrica Pollard, Staff Sgt. Chris Parks, Sgt. Jose Treviso and 1st Lt. David Kuhn. Above, Pfc. Alex Mecca (left) and Cpl. Saul Trevino watch their PSD teammates go through the medical evacuation scenario of the Top M1114 Crew Competition event. Trevino and Mecca's medical advice helped the PSD team ace the event and win the overall competition.**

# Fires Bde. Legal adapts to OpTempo

When the Fires Brigade Legal Office deployed in late 2005, it deployed with less than half its strength. And immediately upon arrival the trial counsel was detailed to work on building the Iraqi Provincial Government.

The Legal Office's mission was to provide legal support not only to the Fires Bde but most Soldiers on Camp Liberty.

Normally, a legal shop that supports close to 4,000 troops will have two attorneys, two or three noncommissioned officers, and three Soldiers. We deployed with one NCO, Sgt. Matthew Edmonds, and one attorney, Capt. Michael Green.

Nevertheless, the Legal shop was up to the challenge, but it soon became necessary to bring one of our Soldiers forward from the rear. Spc. Jonathan Wheaton arrived in late January to support 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery at Forward Operating Base Q-West. While there, he provided military justice and operational legal support to his battalion.

Meanwhile, on Camp Liberty, the operations tempo and caseload was not a one soldier job.

Fortunately, Staff Sgt. Jason Burke joined the brigade as the new legal noncommissioned officer-in-charge. He arrived in mid-February and assumed responsibility for the Fires Brigade Legal Center.

Burke brought with him 13 years of experience in virtually every field within the Judge Advocate General Corps. Burke's arrival effectively doubled our manpower and allowed the shop to be more proactive.

Over the course of the deployment, our shop conducted training for nearly every element of Multi-National Division – Baghdad on the Victory Base Complex. Burke was instrumental in planning and executing Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela's Troops to Leaders Development Program.

Early on in the deployment Edmonds and Wheaton attended the promotion board and were recommended for promotion. Edmonds participated in and won the Brigade

Weapons Competition by a large margin.

Wheaton's first child, Logan, was born in late July. Incidentally, Wheaton's Expiration of Term of Service was in July as well, but his appointment at transition was delayed.

Green's commitment to the Army expired while in country and he decided to extend for at least one more year after re-deployment — he got a great assignment. Green worked tirelessly in the Division Ops Law Cell, and his presence was missed in the Brigade shop.

However, Capt. Diara Andrews filled the gap with outstanding service. Constantly on call to advise our commanders, Andrews stood in as the paragon of Legal Support by supporting not only Fires Brigade, but also the entire VBC.

The deployment was fraught with trials and tribulations. It was extremely difficult to be separated from our loved ones, but the shop pulled together as a team and supported each other at every step.



The Fires Brigade Legal team, from left: Spc. Jonathan Wheaton, Sgt. Matthew Edmonds, Staff Sgt. Jason Burke, Capt. Diara Andrews and Capt. Michael Green.



## Fires Bde. RST looks back on 'memory stones'

The Bible records that when the nation of Israel entered into the Promised Land each tribe placed a stone where they crossed the Jordan River. Those stones were to be a reminder of what God had done for them. They were to be a focal point for generations to ask about.

As we prepare to return from our deployment to Iraq, it's important to remember some of the things that have occurred over the past year.

Before we even arrived, Staff Sgt. Michael Miles and I began split operations. He journeyed north from Kuwait as part of the brigade's advance party.

Miles established a site for the Religious Support Team to operate from, got the "coffeehouse ministry" started with the cappuccino and popcorn machines and at the same time planned and executed a Christmas party for all the Fires Brigade Soldiers already on Camp Liberty.

While taking care of the Iron Gunner's spiritual needs, the Fires Bde. RST was chosen to operate the 4th Infantry Division chapel at Camp Liberty. With this task, we were asked to manage worship services and holiday scheduling of the three chapels on Camp Liberty.

One of those events was the Camp Liberty Easter Sunrise Service. Led by Miles, a detail of 20 Soldiers began setting up chairs, electrical power, sound equip-



**Chap. (Maj.) Michael Allen and Staff Sgt. Michael Miles pose inside Fires Brigade Headquarters.**

ment, and force protection measures at 4:30 a.m. to ensure that the event went flawlessly. Seven different units provided support so more than 350 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and civilian personnel could worship together.

The Iron Gunner RST is currently assisting the 4th Inf. Div. RST in the redeployment process.

We created a package of redeployment training materials which has been shared throughout the division. Please see **RST** page 19

## Fires Bde. reaches retention goals early and often

Retaining America's finest! Army retention doctrine teaches us that when a Soldier is presented with all the information concerning reenlistment, that Soldier can make an informed decision.

Many Soldiers elected to continue their selfless service while deployed. As we prepare to return from our deployment to Iraq, it's important to remember some of the things that have occurred over the past year.

Before arriving in Iraq we worked tirelessly preparing retention packets on each Soldier to ensure the transition into theater was a smooth one. While in Kuwait 55 Fires Brigade Soldiers reenlisted.

While taking care of the Iron Gunners' retention needs, Staff Sgt. Jeffery Gorecki of 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery; Staff Sgts. Richard Bright and Valrica Pollard of 589th Brigade Support Battalion; and Sgt. Vincent Baker of 324th Network Support Company put mission first to ensure their Soldiers were taken care of. They often



**Sgt. 1st Class Mark Kirkland**

scheduled last minute reenlistment ceremonies to support the Soldiers' missions.

When Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Richard Cody made an unannounced visit to Camp Liberty, the Fires Brigade Retention Team reacted immediately. Eight Fires Bde. Soldiers were reenlisted by the VCSA that day.

The Army's transition from quarterly retention missions to annual retention missions presented new challenges for retention personnel.

324th NSC was the first Fires Bde. small unit to accomplish their assigned retention objectives in record time. Shortly thereafter 589TH BSB became the first Fires

Brigade large unit to accomplish their assigned retention objectives. Each of these units earned the Brigade Commanders Excellence in Retention "Early Bird Award."

Striving to be the best in anything is no small task. Being the top producing unit in retention is an even larger task. The past five years has seen retention mission percentages rise due to the need to retain more Soldiers in the Global War on Terrorism.

One of the newest units in Fires Bde., 67th Forward Support Company, 2-20 FA, established a solid retention program resulting. As a result, they won the Brigade Commanders Excellence in Retention "Iron Gunners Top Producer Award," small unit category.

589th BSB received the Brigade Commanders Excellence in Retention "Iron Gunners Top Producer Award" large unit category. Fiscal year 2006 has been a great success for the Iron Gunners Brigade, and we look to continued success in FY 2007.

## Additional photos of S-3, cont'd from pg. 7



**The S-3 1st Shift Soldiers: Sgt. Pulliam Vee, Sgt. Enrique Collazo, Sgt. 1st Class Cardell Drake, Cpl. Donald Barrow and Pfc. Jeremy Elliot.**

Sgt. 1st Class David Udy, Spc. Randy Oglesby, Pfc. Jonatan Cook and Spc. David Kincaide are assigned to Fires Bde.'s S-3 but work at Multi-National Division - Baghdad Headquarters.



**S-3 command team, from left: Sgt. Maj. Kevin Jones, Lt. Cmdr. Michael Moats, Maj. Brian Pierce, Capt. Jared Sutton, Maj. Terrence Braley, Capt. Samuel Burns and 1st Lt. Edward Talamera.**

## Additional S-2 Soldiers, cont'd from pg. 6



**Spc. Samuel Atkins, Sgt. David Penton, Sgt. Matthew Wilson and Spc. Sean Hefflin gather for a photo outside Fires Brigade Headquarters.**

## MEDICS, cont'd from pg. 17

by Capt. Cleve Sylvester, physician's assistant and 2nd Lt. Wes Ket and Staff Sgt. Roland Walker, platoon sergeant, did a lot of moving this year.

Sgt. Charles Egerstrom and Spc. Joshua Kelly provided medical care and training to Battery A, 2-20 FA.

The battery began its deployment on Control Post Wolf and finished the year in Fallujah. Egerstrom and Kelly set up aid stations in both locations.

The rest of the team – Sgt. Gregory Gutierrez and Spcs. Marc Mangino, Kevin Jerrell, Chris Santomo, Bobby Warden, Reggie Lockett, Sarah Hess and Russell Dragon – have moved around with 2-20 FA and are now on Camp Liberty where they provide sick call as well as medical support to guard and patrol missions.

The Soldiers of the Fires Bde. Medical Team are proud to have served their comrades successfully. We're thankful for the support of our friends and families throughout the deployment.

## RST, cont'd from pg. 19

sion to be used during Reunion and Suicide Prevention training. All 4th Inf. Div. Soldiers are getting the same training as the Fires Bde. Soldiers.

We're also serving as a liaison between the Rear Detachment chaplains and other Ironhorse chaplains in scheduling reunion retreats once we return to Fort Hood.

In the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:9, the Lord asks Abel, "Where is your brother, Abel?" And he replied, "I don't know, am I my brother's keeper?"

As the Fires Brigade RST, it is our hope that members of the Fires Brigade have memories that reflect that, yes, we are our "brothers' keeper."



# CSM Canuela's closing remarks

Looking back on the past year, I'd like to say thank you to some important people.

Fires Brigade Leaders — you all show the form of leadership that is exemplified by the Infantry motto: "Follow Me." You are leaders setting the example and leading from the front. You all show it day in and day out by inspiring our Soldiers and creating in their minds the confidence and the willingness to follow you, because they know in their hearts that it is the right thing to do.

Fires Bde. Soldiers — you possess the mental toughness and the moral courage to do the right thing. As I conduct battlefield circulation I see countless Soldiers who have worked quietly and efficiently, sometimes not even realizing they are making a difference for Multi-National Division — Baghdad. You are the ones that the Fires Brigade Command Group counts on to accomplish the mission. You men and women display the work ethic that produces great things which boosts us all to new levels of performance. Thank you for taking on thankless jobs and daily sacrifices to serve our great nation.

Fires Bde. Family Members, Family Readiness Groups and Rear Detachment Soldiers - you all help accomplish the mission by supporting the war-fighter and making our lives better. You are all truly dedicated to duty, personal sacrifice and passion toward the service we honor. You all allowed us to serve forward worry-free by being positive even though you have accomplished the harder task of caring for our children, parents, grandparents, other family members and pets.

I know that I personally miss my wife and my girls. Our Fires Brigade Family and Fort Hood team deserve much recognition for our success here in Iraq. We could not have done it without you. Thank you



**Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela (right) visits Soldiers from Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Fallujah.**

from all of your Fires Brigade Iron Gunners.

Unfortunately, I cannot name all of the individuals who deserve special recognition in this small space. This was not done by magic and it is not an easy thing to accomplish. It is the result of your courage, candor, commitment, competence and compassion.

I must not forget our Department of the Army civilians — Buzz, Stevie and Kenny — who made our lives easier by keeping an eye over our Warriors.

First Fires Brigade in the Army, first in combat. Hooah! GLC

## All together now...



**The Fires Brigade's staff officers and senior noncommissioned officers pose after the Deputy Commander's Challenge, a six-mile run or walk event. 1st Lt. Edward Talamera finished first.**



F I R E S   B R I G A D E   S O L D I E R S

# *One last look*

R E M E M B E R   A   Y E A R   I N   I R A Q







# Waving goodbye...



**The sun sets on the Army's first fires brigade's first deployment.**